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The Heart of the Home

If there's one thing that brings us all together, it's food and the deep connections we create through sharing meals. The kitchen, often considered the heart of the home, is where love, nourishment and creativity come alive. What we eat has the power to heal, energize and sustain us. Food is our medicine, and when prepared with care—using wholesome, organic ingredients—it becomes one of life's greatest joys.

One of my greatest passions is sharing the joy of real food. To me, food is more than just sustenance—it is the foundation of health and wellness. Cooking homemade from scratch may seem daunting, but it's surprisingly simple, quick and deeply rewarding. When we take control of the ingredients we consume, we make conscious choices that support a long and vibrant life. There is something profoundly fulfilling about preparing a meal with fresh, organic vegetables and pasture-raised meats.

Beyond individual health, mindful eating and sustainability go hand in hand. Supporting local farmers and food suppliers that prioritize ethical and sustainable practices is a powerful way to contribute to a healthier planet. But sustainability also begins at home—with the choices we make every day. From composting food scraps and reducing waste to growing our own herbs and vegetables, even small efforts can make a meaningful impact

Whether you're discovering new recipes, savoring a meal with loved ones or planting the first seeds of your garden, may this issue inspire you to embrace the beauty and simplicity of real food. There is nothing quite like the aroma of a homemade meal filling the house, bringing family and friends together.

When we take the time to prepare food with love and intention, we not only nourish our bodies, but also cultivate a sense of togetherness that lingers far beyond the table.

May your kitchen be filled with love, laughter and delicious inspiration!

Trina & John

HEALTHY LIVING HEALTHY PLANET

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Grounding Guidelines for Life with Demo Rinpoche at Jewel Heart

Demo Rinpoche

Join Jewel Heart Spiritual Director Demo Rinpoche for his grounding exploration of Buddhism's tried-and-true approach to everyday life. Offering a path designed to positively impact the hearts and minds of anyone seeking clarity, compassion, peace and wisdom in their lives.

Never-ending Lamp of Liberation: A Modern Lam Rim, an insightful weekly series offered by Demo Rinpoche, is based on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment.

The Lam Rim helps practitioners cultivate mindfulness, compassion and wisdom. The program fosters an appreciation for life's opportunities, strengthens emotional resilience and encourages ethical living. Step-by-step, participants will gain insight into Buddhist philosophy and its practices, gradually reducing negative emotions, developing mental clarity and engaging meaningful action.

Open to all, this onsite Ann Arbor/online via zoom series with Rinpoche will take place on Tuesdays, 7 p.m to 8:30 p.m. beginning March 18, with alternating weeks featuring teaching assistants summarizing key lessons and leading discussions. Recordings will be available for later streaming.

Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center provides a wide range of opportunities for all levels of interest and connection to study and learn, from introductory meditation programs to in-depth study and practice.

Jewel Heart also offers a variety of free virtual programs, including weekly guided meditation sessions and Sunday talks. Special programs with Tibetan Lamas and Western scholars are regularly scheduled throughout the year.

Location: 1129 Oak Valley Dr., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-994-3387 or visit JewelHeart.org.

Holistic Moms Network Joins KnoWEwell to Continue Its Legacy

For more than 20 years, the Holistic Moms Network (HMN) has fostered a nationwide community where families committed to holistic living could connect, support and inspire one another. In response to evolving dynamics, the HMN Board of Directors decided to sunset the organization and partner with KnoWEwell, P.B.C. to ensure its mission continues in a new way.

"We feel blessed that KnoWEwell, a global platform devoted to holistic well-being, will carry forward our legacy," says Andria Kyriakides Somers, HMN's executive director. "In KnoWEwell, we found a kindred spirit that aligns with our values and offers a powerful resource for families committed to holistic health, community connection and natural living. It will continue to be a home for our HMN members where our community of families can connect and thrive. We are also very grateful to Boiron USA, a longtime collaborative partner, for agreeing to serve as HMN's exclusive lifetime sponsor of the HMN website and HMN Legacy Community."

"KnoWEwell is deeply honored to be the new home for the Holistic Moms Network's legacy website, resources and members," says Kimberly B. Whittle, KnoWEwell's CEO and founder. "We have established a new HMN Legacy Community within KnoWEwell's Regenerative Whole Health (RWH) Hub and look forward to welcoming its members and providing them with our RWH benefits and community. We are also grateful for our expanded collaborative partnership with Boiron USA and its sole sponsorship of the HMN website and community."

"Boiron USA has long valued our collaboration with the HMN and their dedication to empowering families on their holistic health journeys," says Janick Boudazin, CEO and president of Boiron USA. "As a leader in homeopathy, we recognize the importance of education in helping families make informed health choices. Through our continued support as the exclusive sponsor of the HMN website and Legacy Community, we are committed to ensuring access to reliable information, meaningful connections and trusted resources that advance awareness and understanding of homeopathic medicine for years to come."

For more information and to join KnoWEwell's RWH Hub and the HMN Legacy Community, visit KnoWEwell.com.

Beneficial Omega Supplements Available at Better Health Market

Better Health Market emphasizes the vital role of omega fatty acids in maintaining overall health, particularly for those that may not consume enough through diet alone. Essential fatty acids, including omega-3 and omega-6, are necessary for numerous bodily functions but must be obtained from food or supplements.

Omega-3s, found in fish, flaxseeds and leafy greens, support heart health by regulating blood pressure and reducing the risk of arrhythmias. They also contribute to cognitive function and mental well-being, aiding conditions such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and depression. Additionally, research suggests omega-3s may lower the risk of certain cancers, strengthen bones and joints and help manage autoimmune disorders like rheumatoid arthritis and Crohn's disease.

While whole foods remain the best source of omega-3s, supplements from Better Health Market can provide an effective alternative for individuals who do not regularly consume fatty fish. Clinical studies indicate that taking 1 gram of omega-3 daily can significantly reduce the risk of heart attacks.

Omega-6 fatty acids, often misunderstood, are also essential for heart and circulatory health. Contrary to earlier beliefs, the American Heart Association confirms that omega-6 fats do not cause inflammation and, in fact, may offer cardiovascular benefits. Striking a balance between omega-3 and omega-6 intake is key to optimizing health.

Better Health Market offers a wide selection of high-quality omega supplements at competitive prices, ensuring customers have access to the best nutritional options.

Location: 3500 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-975-6613 or visit BetterHealthMarket.com. See ad on page 19.

Premium Organic Cannabidiolic Acid (CBDA) Products for Health and Wellness

Tyler, Cameron and Seth Troszak

Northern Growin' CBDA, LLC, a family-owned business dedicated to producing high-quality CBDA products, is bringing the power of cannabidiolic acid to those seeking natural health solutions. With a commitment to sustainable farming and organic practices, the company offers CBDA products designed to support overall well-being.

CBDA is the rawest form of hemp-derived cannabinoids, serving as the precursor to CBD. Unlike CBD, CBDA has a higher bioavailability, allowing the body to absorb and utilize it more efficiently. Research suggests CBDA may support stress reduction, mood improvement, sleep enhancement, skincare and discomfort management. With its rapid absorption and effectiveness, CBDA offers an alternative for those looking to incorporate cannabinoids into their daily wellness routines.

Northern Growin' CBDA sources its hemp from a non-spray farm that avoids pesticides, herbicides and fungicides. The company grows 100 percent certified organic hemp in low-carbon-footprint environments, using sustainable practices such as hand-picking crops and cultivating plants in protected structures to shield them from environmental contaminants.

Founded by three brothers, Tyler, Cameron and Seth Troszak, Northern Growin' CBDA has deep roots in organic farming. The family initially specialized in growing all-natural vegetables before expanding into hemp cultivation. Their dedication to purity, quality and sustainability has positioned them as a trusted source for CBDA products.

Location: 4745 Sigma Rd., SE, Kalkaska. For more information or to place an order, call 231-310-1960 or visit NorthernGrowinCBDA.com. See ad on page 11.

Wonder Walks at Matthaei Botanical Gardens Inspire Nature Exploration

Community members of all ages are invited to experience the beauty and wonder of nature through a series of free, guided Wonder Walks at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Designed to spark curiosity and provide interactive learning experiences, these walks offer a unique way to connect with the natural world.

Held on select Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. and Sundays at 1 p.m., Wonder Walks encourage participants to observe, ask questions and deepen their appreciation for the environment. If a large, mixed-age group is present, guides may divide participants into two sets to ensure tailored engagement. No registration is required, making it an easy and accessible activity for families, individuals and nature lovers.

Participants should gather inside the lobby of Matthaei Botanical Gardens 10 minutes before the walk begins. For Wednesday walks, guests are encouraged to arrive by 5:20 p.m., and for Sunday walks, by 12:50 p.m. Led by experienced guides, each walk offers a fresh perspective on the landscape, wildlife and seasonal changes.

The March series highlights the transition from winter to spring, featuring themes such as early-blooming plants, the vernal equinox and local beaver activity. Walkers will have the opportunity to search for signs of spring, witness the changes in the ecosystem and learn about the resident beaver family along Fleming Creek.

Location: 1800 N. Dixboro Rd., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-647-7600 or visit Mbgna.UMich.edu/Wonder-Walks.

Vocal Biomarkers to Diagnose Diabetes

Researchers at the Luxembourg Institute of Health have developed a voice-based algorithm with the help of artificial intelligence that can potentially detect Type 2 diabetes. The screening analyzes subtle changes in a person's voice, which are not usually noticeable to the human ear. This could represent an early and non-invasive diagnostic tool. Diabetes can affect the vocal cords as a result of nerve damage, thereby affecting voice quality.

The technology was tested in a study of 600 U.S. participants published in *PLOS Digital Health*. Researchers deemed the accuracy of the algorithm to be comparable to traditional risk assessment tools recommended by the American Diabetes Association. Next steps include refining the algorithm to detect pre-diabetes and expanding its use in other languages.

The Luxembourg researchers estimate there are 400 million undiagnosed cases of Type 2 diabetes worldwide. Without treatment, this disease can lead to serious health issues such as cardiovascular disease and neuropathy, as well as higher healthcare costs and even mortality. Current screening relies on blood tests.

The Temptation of Ultra-Processed Foods

The National Institutes of Health is conducting a study to help determine why so many people can't stop eating ultra-processed foods. The study includes 36 participants living in a controlled setting for a month. They can eat as much as they like up to 6,000 calories per day, with a different type of diet each week.

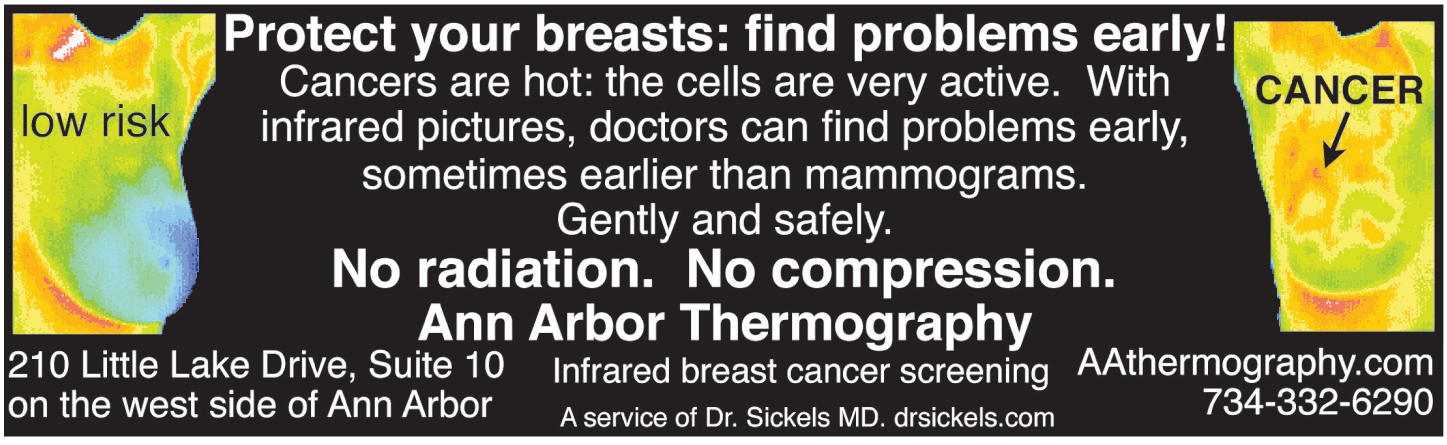
One diet includes minimally processed foods such as oatmeal, strawberries and walnuts. Another diet involves ultra-processed, energy-dense (high-calorie) meals with most calories coming from hard-to-resist foods such as honey-roasted peanuts. A third diet is also ultra-processed and energy dense, but with fewer calories from the hyper-palatable items. The fourth diet consists of packaged foods that are neither energy-dense nor hard to resist, such as scrambled eggs from a liquid egg product, flavored yogurt and oatmeal with fiber powder and heavy cream.

Preliminary data from 18 of the participants found that while each diet made them feel full and satisfied, their consumption of calories differed, depending upon how hard-to-resist and energy-dense the food choices were. When subjects were given an energy-dense diet with very palatable foods like honey-roasted peanuts, they consumed about 1,000 more calories than with the other diets. When they were offered an ultra-processed diet that was neither energy-dense nor hyper-palatable, the calorie count increased by only 170.

The findings suggest that eating packaged foods does not automatically result in overeating or weight gain. The key may be avoiding hyper-palatable foods and offsetting energy-dense foods with unprocessed foods like salads.

The Effects of Loneliness on Mental Health

According to a recent study by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health and the National Institute of Mental Health published in *Nature Mental Health*, three factors—loneliness, a prior psychiatric diagnosis and stress-related social distancing—were all predictors for experiencing psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic.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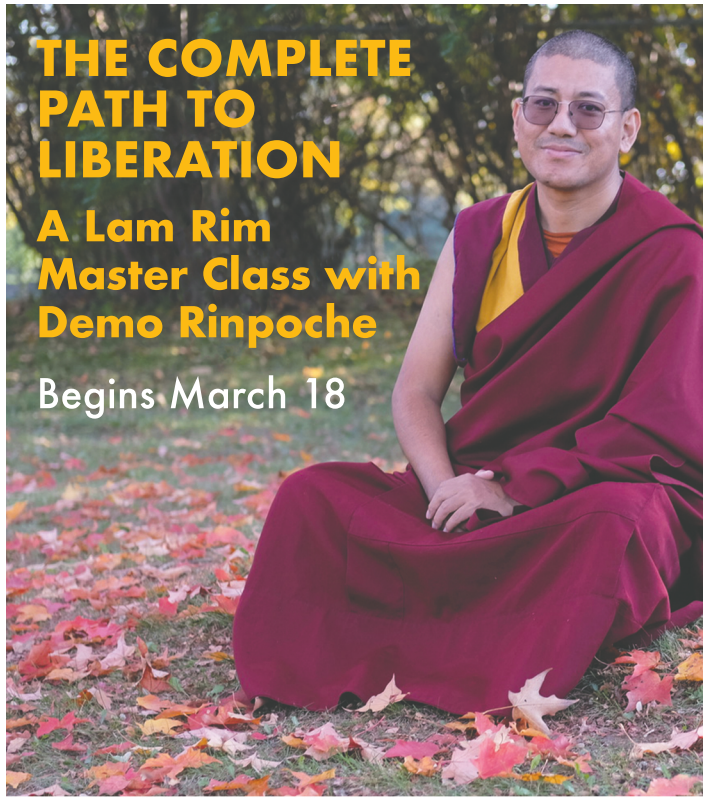
The internet-based study included more than 3,600 participants that reported their mental and physical health and COVID-related circumstances every two weeks for six months during the first year of the pandemic. Those with a previous psychiatric diagnosis experienced greater psychological distress than those without such a history, supporting public health initiatives to address loneliness and social isolation to improve mental health.

Non-Opioid Pain Killer Approved

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved a new non-opioid pain reliever called suzetrigine to treat moderate to severe short-term pain in adults. Marketed as Journavx by Vertex Pharmaceuticals, the drug works by blocking a specific channel that transmits pain signals to the brain. After the tragedy of tens of thousands of opioid-related deaths, this non-addictive option for use after surgery or for acute pain management is a welcome alternative. Journavx was evaluated in two randomized, double-blind trials, and was found to demonstrate a statistically significant superior reduction in pain compared to a placebo.

Benefits of Plum Blossom Acupuncture

The use of plum blossom acupuncture therapy has been documented for more than 2,000 years. It involves the use of a handle equipped with seven short needles in the shape of a plum blossom. It is commonly used in pediatric acupuncture because of its shallow penetration of the skin. Beginning in the 1950s, electric stimulation was added. Today, digital electric plum blossom acupuncture is used to treat a variety of conditions, including skin diseases like acne *vulgaris*, alopecia, hives, eye disorders, juvenile myopia, and impaired or dim vision in children.



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Personalized Nutrition

Fine-Tuning the Dinner Plate

by Carrie Jackson

Targeted nutrition is emerging as one of the year's biggest areas of growth in the field of health care. Data researchers at Statista estimate that the global personalized nutrition market will exceed $16 billion in 2025. From elite athletes to busy professionals, consumers are looking for individualized recommendations that take their lifestyles and unique physiological needs into consideration. Smart devices, artificial intelligence (AI) and comprehensive testing are helping people identify their nutritional requirements and make informed dietary choices. Greater attention is also being placed on the gut microbiome and customized supplementation. The one-size-fits-all approach to eating is dwindling.

Kerry Health and Nutrition Institute, a global food research organization, recently listed targeted nutrition in their top five trends for 2025, suggesting a greater emphasis on individual "need states" that might focus on the health status of the heart, joints, bones or gut, or on personal goals associated with sports nutrition, while nutritionists are using finely tuned supplements that cater to individual requirements. Joint and bone health benefit from anti-inflammatory compounds and improved calcium absorption, for example, while cognitive health is supported by nootropics, medicinal substances that improve thinking, learning, memory and gut-brain axis modulation. Consumers are also opting for innovative ingredients like collagen peptides, omega-3 amino acids, postbiotics and adaptogens to enhance their health status and optimize their fitness.

Health-Tracking Aids

Technology is making it easier to measure how our bodies are responding and performing at any given time. "Smart watches, smart rings and armband devices can track heart rate and oxygen levels, and monitor blood pressure levels. Some healthcare providers may recommend continuous glucose monitors to track blood sugar trends and fitness devices to track physical activity," says Sue-Ellen Anderson-Haynes, a registered dietitian nutritionist and owner of 360Girls&Women, which offers personalized nutrition plans for health improvement or maintenance.

Using AI-powered products and services, consumers have the ability to receive nutritionist-backed recommendations, monitor their progress and make adjustments based on food preferences, health goals and other variables such as age, gender and body mass index. It is a streamlined path to improving eating habits, tailoring meal plans and creating recipes that align with health objectives and personal preferences.

Anastasiia Nurullina from baseimage/CanvaPro

Dietitians Can Help

For even more personalization, Anderson-Haynes notes, "A registered dietitian nutritionist can evaluate past medical history, nutrition, physical activity, age, biochemical and anthropometric measurements, laboratory data, and socioeconomic and education levels. In addition, they might perform functional medical testing that includes specialized hormone testing, a review of food intolerances and microbiome testing. About 70 to 80 percent of our immune cells are found within the gut. Studies show that the more diverse the healthy microbes are in the gut, the lower the risk of inflammation and diseases like diabetes, heart disease, dementia and certain cancers. In addition, when our gut is functioning well, it allows for proper

Prostock-studio/CanvaPro

metabolism processes to occur, like digestion and the absorption of nutrients from the foods we eat."

While research on the gut-brain axis is still ongoing, it is becoming clearer that the nerves that send signals between the gut and the brain may be influenced by the foods we eat. Anderson-Haynes suggests, "Healthful nutrients for the microbiome may include prebiotic fiber, probiotics, omega-3s, anthocyanins [plants that are blue, violet or red] and resveratrol [a defensive substance found in the skin of plants, fruits and seeds]. Studies show that the health components in these foods positively affect mood, anxiety, depression, the immune system and the nervous system."

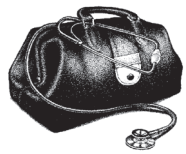
Other supplementation may be necessary or advised. "While there are a variety of supplements on the market, a personalized assessment and evaluation reveal what each person may need. For example, if there is a deficiency that food alone may not be able to increase, then a vitamin or mineral supplement will be needed," explains Anderson-Haynes. "Symptoms of low levels of vitamin D may include fatigue, depression, muscle weakness and hair loss, and if vitamin D levels are deficient, then a supplement will be needed. If there are reports and symptoms of anxiety and excessive stress, supplements generally recommended to support the nervous system may be ashwagandha, magnesium, vitamin C and others. There are also evidence-based herbal remedies utilized by functional medicine practitioners to support hormone imbalances."

Anderson-Haynes encourages clients to listen to their own bodies and to prioritize nourishment at every meal. "Food is amazing. It comes in all shapes, sizes, textures and tastes. It serves as the backdrop for social engagements and helps express culture. When done right, it's absolutely delicious. It also serves as an element of strengthening and healing to the body. No matter your eating style, if you're trying to eat more plant-based, with less to no animal foods, you're in the right place," she says.

The Gut and a Healthy Immune System

According to Monique Ryan, an Illinois-based sports dietitian and author of *Sports Nutrition for Endurance Athletes,* because 70 percent of the immune system is in the

Holistic Care



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The Gut and a Healthy Immune System

According to Monique Ryan, an Illinois-based sports dietitian and author of *Sports Nutrition for Endurance Athletes,* because 70 percent of the immune system is in the gastrointestinal tract, personalized nutrition begins by getting the microbiome functioning properly. "The gut is the first line of barrier to food. If it's been damaged or hurt, people may experience increased intestinal permeability, also known as leaky gut," she explains.

Ryan recommends food sensitivity testing to evaluate the body's reaction to more than 175 foods. "Once we get our test results, we can create a protocol for an oligoantigenic diet, which takes out all the antigens that cause inflammation in the body. It's a very personalized anti-inflammatory diet and targets what people are specifically sensitive to," she says. "Anyone can go on the internet and find a generic anti-inflammatory diet, but what causes inflammation varies from person to person."

For Ryan, all aspects of a patient's background and lifestyle can offer pivotal clues. "I'll sit down with each patient and take a detailed health history, including their nutrition background. Genetics also factor into overall nutrition, so we'll look at family history and any hereditary diseases. I'll analyze their most recent bloodwork and look at what they typically eat and what their activity levels are," she attests. "The more I learn about a patient, the better I can personalize a plan based on their specific needs and not just their test results."

Ideally, nutrients are supplied through food, but some supplements may be necessary based on the patient's blood levels. "Vitamin D, which plays a key role in immune system health, is not readily supplied by food, so most people should be taking it in supplement form," Ryan says. "I also generally recommend a probiotic and prebiotic to support gut health. Other supplements are highly personal and vary based on the patient's individual needs."

Ryan urges clients to choose whole, fiber-rich foods with no added chemicals. "Simple, minimally processed foods are generally the most nutritious and efficient for the body to process. So, an almond milk that has almonds, water and maybe salt is going to be better for the body than one with multiple additives and chemical ingredients," she explains.

Eating for Peak Performance

Ryan also works with high-level athletes. For them, personalized nutrition helps to ensure they are performing at peak levels. "Many athletes have Garmin or Polar monitors that measure their caloric output. Combined with body composition tests, these give us an overview of their metabolic and energy needs," she says. "From there, we still have to tailor their nutrition plan for that day's specific training. They might burn 500 additional calories one day and 1,000 in another. It depends on the athlete's metabolism, their particular sport and what their specific training protocol is for that day. It's not one-size-fits-all or eating the same thing every day."

Carrie Jackson is a Chicago-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to Natural Awakenings. *Connect at CarrieJacksonWrites.com.*

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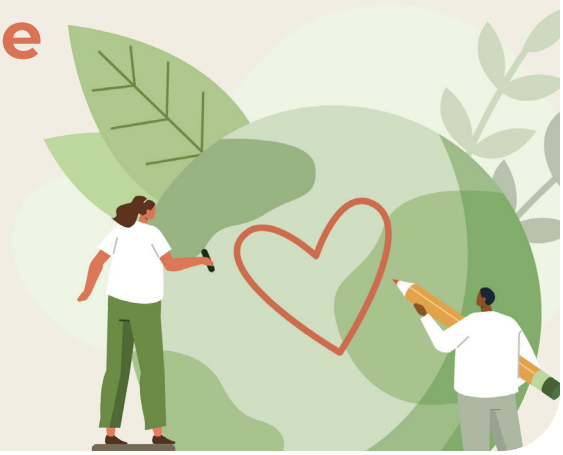

Community Supported Agriculture for 2025 Summer Season

As the summer growing season approaches, Jacob's Fresh Farm is offering fresh, naturally grown produce through its 2025 Summer Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. The farm provides an opportunity for individuals and families to access high-quality, nutrient-dense food while supporting sustainable agriculture and local food systems.

CSA programs connect consumers directly with farmers, fostering a deeper understanding of food production and its seasonal rhythms. By purchasing a CSA share, members receive weekly or biweekly boxes of fresh, seasonal produce harvested at peak ripeness. This approach reduces food miles, minimizes environmental impact and ensures members enjoy superior flavor and nutrition.

The 12-week summer CSA runs from July 9 through September 24. Shares are available in two sizes to accommodate different household needs. A full share offers eight to 10 seasonal produce items per week, plus two to three specialty items such as garlic or herbs and is ideal for families of two to three people and a half share that provides the same quantity every other week, making it a suitable option for smaller households. Pickups take place at the farm's designated self-serve location in Dexter, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Throughout the season, CSA members receive a diverse selection of farm-fresh vegetables, beginning with early crops such as lettuce, kale and other greens before transitioning to summer favorites including tomatoes, sweet corn, squash, eggplant and peppers. Jacob's Fresh Farm's commitment to growing a wide variety of produce ensures an exciting mix of flavors and cooking possibilities.

A strong proponent of sustainable farming practices, the farm operates on 40 acres with a focus on soil health, biodiversity and environmentally responsible cultivation methods. Half of the land is dedicated to producing fresh fruits and vegetables for the CSA and local farmers markets, while 10 acres feature U-pick strawberries, raspberries, lavender, sunflowers and pumpkins. The remaining acreage serves as a pollinator habitat, supporting native species and the farm's honeybee apiary, which produces hundreds of gallons of raw honey annually.

While not certified organic, the farm adheres to a strict natural growing philosophy. It uses compost, natural fertilizers and cover crops to nurture soil health, supporting beneficial microbes that enhance plant nutrient uptake. Pest management relies on biological controls and naturally derived pesticides, applied with care to protect pollinators and the surrounding ecosystem.

Beyond providing fresh produce, Jacob's Fresh Farm is committed to strengthening the local food system by collaborating with regional businesses and fostering community engagement. By participating in the CSA, members contribute to a more resilient and self-sustaining agricultural network while enjoying a direct connection to their food source.

To join the 2025 Summer CSA, interested individuals can complete an online form to receive an agreement and total pricing details. Enrollment is open until shares are filled.

Location: 475 N. Fletcher Rd., Dexter. For more information, call 517-250-1222 or visit JacobsFreshFarm.com.

Judith Cruz

on A Holistic Approach to Food Insecurity

by Sandra Yeyati

Judith Cruz is an avid warrior in the fight against hunger. For 15 years, she has served as president and CEO of the Treasure Coast Food Bank (TCFB), a regional hunger-relief nonprofit in Fort Pierce, Florida, that distributed 55 million meals last year, more than half of which consisted of fresh produce. She is a former board member of Feeding America and past chair of Feeding Florida.

Every day, Cruz and the hard-working employees and volunteers at TCFB aim to help the most vulnerable, including children, seniors and people facing costly medical bills, underemployment or other economic struggles. Through partnerships with local farmers, ranchers and retailers, the organization provides access to fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as dairy and protein options. TCFB collaborates with agencies, local governments and other nonprofits to take healthy sustenance into at-risk neighborhoods, including hard-to-reach rural communities, through mobile pantries.

Could you define food insecurity?

It's a condition where people don't have reliable access to healthy, affordable food on an ongoing basis. They might not know where their next meal is coming from. They might have limitations as to how many times a day or per week they can eat. Folks that are struggling with food insecurity might have only one meal a day and have limitations on what that would be. It might not be the most healthy meal. It could be low-quality food, and all of that has a negative impact on their overall physical and mental health and well-being.

How prevalent is food insecurity?

Nationally, one in five people are food insecure, and certain groups are more vulnerable. When we talk about people struggling to put food on their table, it's natural to visualize the commercials of families in other countries that are starving. In the United States, people are starving in a different way. They are being filled with empty calories, creating a host of health issues and health

disparities that accompany empty calories, including obesity. For children, eating poorly can result in disciplinary struggles.

What are the most common causes of food insecurity?

Many things contribute to it, including poverty and food deserts. People living in low-income areas more than likely don't have access to grocery stores or markets with healthy foods, so they're eating empty calories. There are people struggling with underemployment, unemployment, the high cost of living, health issues or high medical bills. Here in Florida, rental housing has become unaffordable. And then there are the racial and ethnic disparities that people experience.

How does a food bank help people struggling with food insecurity?

This food bank is a bit of an innovator with more of a holistic approach. We take the person that is in need of assistance and look at the other areas where they're struggling. It's not just about providing food, but it's providing those wraparound services that they may need to make it easier for them to lift themselves up out of the situation that they're in.

Obviously, our core mission is to provide food now. In collaboration with partner

agencies and emergency organizations, we supply food for distribution at soup kitchens and pantries, and also do our own distributions through mobile and pop-up pantries. But in addition, we also provide SNAP [food stamp] assistance and connect them to all kinds of social services through our benefits outreach programs and community partners. It's kind of a one-stop shop for folks.

If you're coming to us for food assistance, you can meet with our case manager and get information about housing, health care and other services in one sitting without having to go to different agencies. We also offer job training programs for people that need new training or a career path that can pay them a better living wage than what they're currently earning. The goal is to reduce hunger not just by providing food, but by helping people with the different services and providing other essential items that they might need, like shampoo and cleaning products.

How important is the contribution of volunteers?

Volunteers are critical to every piece of our operation—without them, we couldn't do it. Last year, we had just over 11,000 volunteers that provided over 45,000 hours of service working in food distribution, special events, the office and in the food production kitchen where we prepare meals every day.

Do you have hope?

I have hope because of the volunteers. After a natural disaster or at the worst time in someone's life, there's always someone here doing what they can to make it better. Humanity always surprises me because we step up. I would encourage everybody to give their time, talent or treasure to any organization they care about. Nonprofits can't do it alone. They need help from the community, and if folks have time or some money to give, that's the best thing they can do for any organization, whether it's a food bank, the arts or a children's charity.

Sandra Yeyati is the national editor of Natural Awakenings *magazine.*

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Cooking With Healthy Oils

The Secret to Anti-Inflammatory Meals

by Marlaina Donato

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Healthy oils can quell chronic, systemic inflammation—a condition that significantly exacerbates the risks of cardiovascular illness, autoimmune conditions and neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Beneficial fats are indispensable for metabolic processes, brain function, hormone production and the absorption of vitamins A, D, E and K. For overall well-being, the optimal choices are cold-pressed, anti-inflammatory oils made from avocados, walnuts and flaxseeds, as well as extra-virgin olive oil and modest amounts of virgin coconut oil.

Inflammatory Fats

The typical American diet of drive-through meals and processed, packaged foods like salad dressing, ketchup, mayonnaise and sweet treats in the cookie aisle contains refined vegetable and seed oils. Whether it's safflower, sunflower, corn, soybean, canola or cottonseed oil, these polyunsaturated fatty acid oils are often bleached, deodorized and chemically extracted with hexane to ensure a greater, more cost-effective yield with a longer shelf life. Such refinement methods destroy the naturally occurring antioxidants. Consequently, a diet high in ultra-processed foods containing seed and vegetable oils can increase systemic inflammation.

"Polyunsaturated fatty acids have multiple double bonds in their carbon chains. This structure makes them fragile and prone to becoming inflammatory compounds," explains Sara Banta, a health coach and supplement specialist in Newport Beach, California. "They also inhibit fatty acid beta-oxidation, making your body less efficient at using fat for fuel and leading to larger fat cells."

Healthy Oils

Avocado Oil: Rich in monounsaturated fats and vitamin E, avocado oil is a versatile choice for moist muffins, roasted vegetables and flavorful homemade salad dressings. With a high smoke point, avocado oil is perfect for savory stir-fries and mouthwatering, healthy grills. In a study published in *Disease Markers* involving rat subjects, avocado oil was found to partially reverse inflammatory processes and reduce levels of triglycerides and low-density lipoprotein ("bad" cholesterol), without affecting high-density lipoprotein ("good" cholesterol) levels. Banta cautions, "Most avocado oils are cut with seed oils. In fact, over 60 percent of the avocado oils are not pure avocado oil, so buyer beware. Look for a brand you trust that is organic."

AlexPro9500 from Getty Images/CanvaPro

Olive Oil: Consider using extra-virgin olive oil, an important culinary staple that offers impeccable health properties and delicious flavor to appetizers, dipping sauces, salads and sautés. Studies have reported that regular consumption of olive oil may be linked to lower levels of certain markers of inflammation, including C-reactive protein and interleukin-6, as well as a lower risk of dying from cardiovascular disease. Banta notes that olive oil is a heart-healthy choice because of its high levels of monounsaturated fats and antioxidants, and a perfect oil for dressings and low-heat cooking. Organic, cold-pressed olive oil is the best option because it is processed without using high heat or chemical solvents.

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Walnut Oil: According to a 2023 review published in *Antioxidants*, drizzling walnut oil over a grain bowl or grilled salmon may help prevent chronic inflammatory diseases and cancer. Rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids and prebiotics, it was found to promote the growth of beneficial gut bacteria, as well as urolithin, a potent natural compound with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

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merzntalia from Getty Images/CanvaPro

Alpha-Linolenic Acid: Mayo Clinic suggests that alpha-linolenic acid, a plant-based omega-3 fatty acid found in flaxseed oil, might help individuals with heart disease or women going through menopause. Flaxseed oil offers its powerful nutrients best when used unheated and can be whipped up in smoothies, sprinkled on soup, drizzled over salads or cottage cheese and added to protein-packed nut butter energy balls.

Coconut Oil: When used in moderation, coconut oil is also a versatile option in the kitchen for sautés, desserts, curries and healthy breakfast shakes. Research published in the *Journal of Nutritional Science* in 2024 suggests that this lauric acid-rich oil lowers inflammation and relieves COVID-19 symptoms. "Coconut oil offers numerous health benefits due to its unique composition and stability at high temperatures," says Banta. "Rich in medium-chain triglycerides, coconut oil provides a quick and efficient energy source, supporting metabolism and promoting fat burning."

Eating Out

When eating out, be mindful that most salad dressings and marinades are likely to contain highly processed, inflammatory oils. To minimize ill effects, Banta recommends asking for salad dressing on the side or replacing it with vinegar or lemon; requesting that the chef use the healthier option of real butter instead of vegetable or seed oil; and avoiding fried foods.

Marlaina Donato is an author, painter and composer. Connect at WildflowersAndWoodSmoke.com.

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Sara Banta

SKINNY CAESAR DRESSING

YIELD: 8 SERVINGS *(ABOUT 16 TBSP)*

⅔ cup organic fat-free Greek yogurt
2 Tbsp lemon juice
1 Tbsp paleo, avocado oil-based mayonnaise (such as Primal Kitchen)
1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
2 to 3 anchovies in oil
½ tsp sea salt
¼ tsp black pepper
¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese (optional)
Pinch garlic powder (optional)

Blend everything in a mini blender until smooth. Serve over butter lettuce with cucumbers, shredded carrots and bell peppers, or use as a dip for veggies.

Recipe and image courtesy of Sara Banta.

GRILLED SALMON

YIELD: 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

4 to 6 8-oz, 1-inch-thick salmon filets, skin-on
1 Tbsp avocado oil
2 tsp sea salt
1 lemon cut into 4 wedges

Prepare an outdoor grill for direct cooking over high heat at 450° to 550° F. Brush the cooking grates clean and close the lid to heat. Alternatively, heat a cast-iron pan over very high heat.

Generously coat the flesh side of the salmon filets with oil and season evenly with salt. Grill the salmon, skin side down, over direct high heat with the lid closed, or in the pan, for about six to eight minutes or until the fish lightens in color, becomes more firm to the touch and can be lifted off the cooking grates or pan without sticking.

Turn the salmon over, close the lid, and cook until the meat reaches 130° F—about two to four minutes for medium rare or longer for desired doneness. Transfer to a platter to rest for one to two minutes.

Slide the salmon skin off the filets and serve with wedges of lemon and a side salad or veggies of choice.

Recipe courtesy of Sara Banta.

Stan Horia's Images/CanvaPro

Sara Banta

EASY TZATZIKI

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

2 mini-Persian cucumbers, chopped into small pieces
2 tsp sea salt, divided
1 cup Greek yogurt (any fat percentage)
1 Tbsp lemon juice
1 Tbsp finely chopped fresh dill

Sprinkle chopped cucumbers with one teaspoon of salt and let them rest in a colander for 10 minutes to draw out some moisture. Pat dry with a paper towel.

Combine the cucumbers, Greek yogurt, lemon juice, dill and remaining salt and stir until well incorporated. Serve over vegetables or meats as a dressing or dip.

Recipe and image courtesy of Sara Banta.

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Sober-Curious

A Growing Trend for Health and Personal Growth

by Maya Whitman

From champagne wedding toasts to college spring break, celebrating life's milestones with alcohol is deeply ingrained in our culture. The idea of pouring a drink and having a good time or unwinding with a cocktail after a hard day at work is considered the norm for many people. A 2024 study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* reported that alcohol consumption rose during the COVID-19 pandemic and continued to rise through 2022, especially in those aged 40 to 49.

Even daily moderate drinking as defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—up to two standard drinks for men and one for women—comes with a hefty price tag of increased risks for cancer, heart disease and cognitive decline. Women are more likely to develop malignancies, chronic liver disease and cardiovascular issues. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one person is killed every 39 minutes due to drunk driving.

A sober-curious counterculture led by Gen Z individuals born between the 1990s and 2010s is forging a fresh path and spurring a new industry of alcohol-free venues, including "dry" bars, clubs, music festivals and events. According to a 2020 study by the University of Michigan, the percentage of college students ditching alcohol increased from 20 to 28 percent from 2002 to 2018, while up to 30 percent of those not in school are opting for life without the inevitable hangovers. Alcohol abuse on

campuses has dropped by half compared to 20 years ago, and taking an extended break from alcoholic drinks is on the upswing, as monthly challenges like "Dry January" and "Sober October" become more popular.

Easing Into Sobriety

"You do not need to be an alcoholic to benefit from exploring the role alcohol plays in your life or pursuing sobriety," says Katie Campbell, a board-certified health and wellness coach in Ipswich, Massachusetts, who is passionate about alcohol-free living. "The term 'sober-curious' refers to anyone who wants to explore more deeply or consciously how their personal relationship to alcohol is affecting them in mind, body and spirit, no matter how much they drink."

Calling it a curiosity rather than full-blown sobriety gives people the freedom to experiment with their lifestyle choices. By not setting strict rules or unrealistic goals, they are not setting themselves up for failure. "In my own life, I was sober-curious for years, especially throughout my thirties. Every time I took a break from alcohol, I felt so much more alive and deeply connected to myself," says Didi Jordan, an alcohol-free life coach and founder of Sober Chapters, in Los Angeles, California.

After periods of sober-curious experimentation throughout her 30s, Jordan finally embraced a fully sober life by age 40. "The transformation was undeniable," she attests. "Opportunities unfolded in ways I could never have imagined, and every area of my life leveled up."

Benefits Without Booze

According to research published in *BMJ Open* in 2018, setting booze down for just one month lowers the risks of cardiovascular events, insulin resistance, liver disease and cancer in moderate to heavy drinkers. Experts at Allina Health, a nonprofit healthcare system in Minneapolis, assert that abstinence improves sleep quality, sexual intimacy, energy and concentration. It is a great way to save calories and money, too.

Campbell recalls that alcohol fueled a false sense of confidence and bravado that she mistook for real courage. "Drinking socially actually robbed my confidence and worsened anxiety in the days to follow," she asserts, adding that there are myriad benefits to abandoning alcohol, including deeper interpersonal connections and meaningful engagement without forgetting conversations or regretting remarks.

The abundance of a life free from escapism also spills into other areas. "I truly believe that deep down, you know when alcohol is no longer serving you," says Jordan. "It's about not just the physical or mental health benefits, but also the immense personal and spiritual growth. When alcohol is no longer part of the equation, we begin to uncover what our soul is calling us to do."

Campbell's definition of fun has dramatically shifted to newly discovered hobbies, chasing new dreams and being there for loved ones 100 percent. She affirms, "Most of all, my son, Arthur, will never see me drunk, and I don't have to ever regret missing a moment of watching him grow." Initially, nixing cocktails at gatherings might feel awkward, but Campbell advises, "Stick with it, and eventually what feels uncomfortable will evolve into a superpower. I love socializing sober!"

Trialing sobriety was the best gift Jordan ever gave to herself. "I didn't start with the pressure of committing to forever," she says. "Instead, I gave myself the freedom to explore."

Maya Whitman is a regular contributor to Natural Awakenings.

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Canine Gut Health

Protecting a Dog's Microbiome

by Ruth Roberts, DVM, CVA, CVH, CVFT, NAN

Gut health is essential for a dog's well-being. For optimal functioning, the gut depends on its microbiome, a collection of microorganisms throughout the digestive tract that modulate inflammation; assist with digestion and nutrient absorption; protect against harmful bacteria; and influence mood, behavior and stress responses.

Immune Health and Inflammation

A 2018 report published in *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice* outlines our current understanding of how the gut microbiome in dogs and cats is closely intertwined with their immune system. A protective mucous layer separates gut microbes from the intestinal lining, acting as a barrier to prevent harmful bacteria from interacting with intestinal cells.

Specialized dendritic cells extend out of the mucous layer to monitor microbial activity, differentiating between helpful and harmful bacteria. Two types of white blood cells control the proliferation of detrimental bacteria and prevent infections: B cells, which produce antibodies that bind to pathogens and neutralize them; and macrophages that surround and kill offenders and remove the dead cells.

The gut microbiome also manages inflammation—ramping it up to fight infections or keeping it at bay at other times. Factors like a poor diet, antibiotics and stress can disrupt the balance of beneficial and harmful bacteria, potentially exacerbating inflammation or creating other gut health issues.

Dietary Recommendations

"Many processed dog foods contain fillers and artificial ingredients that harm dog gut health over time," says holistic pet health coach Denise Bozenski. "Artificial preservatives, colors and flavors disrupt the gut microbiome. Common ingredients like corn, wheat, soy and byproducts can cause inflammation and contribute to digestive issues."

She recommends choosing high-quality foods made with whole, fresh ingredients, while avoiding heavily processed options packed with fillers. A homemade dog diet can be an excellent choice to promote gut health if it is balanced and made with naturally fresh ingredients. Variety is key for a healthy gut microbiome. A diet with diverse whole foods supports a pet's digestive system.

"A healthy gut needs a balance of fiber, protein, healthy fats, and essential vitamins and minerals. Omega-3 fatty acids from sources like fish or flaxseed oil also play a critical role in reducing inflammation," explains Bozenski. She recommends a gut-friendly homemade meal plan that includes fiber-rich vegetables such as sweet potatoes, pumpkin, carrots and zucchini; easily digestible proteins, including fish, poultry and turkey; prebiotics like flaxseeds and chicory root; healthy fats such as coconut or flaxseed oil; and fermented foods like kefir or plain yogurt that provide beneficial probiotics.

Transitioning to Fresh Food

Switching a dog's diet from processed to fresh food requires a progressive approach to avoid digestive upset. "Start by mixing a small amount of naturally fresh dog food with their current processed food, gradually increasing the fresh food portion over seven to 10 days. This gradual shift allows the dog's digestive system to adjust," recommends Bozenski.

She also warns against common mistakes such as failing to balance the diet properly and relying too much on a single ingredient. "Dogs need a variety of nutrients. Without the right proportions of protein, fats and carbohydrates, their gut health could suffer. Additionally, feeding too much of one ingredient can lead to an imbalance in the gut microbiome," she explains, adding that it is best to consult with a holistic pet health coach or canine nutritionist to ensure the diet is balanced and supports gut health.

"It's important to avoid feeding dogs toxic foods like onions, chocolate and certain spices," stresses Bozenski. "Many dogs are also sensitive to specific ingredients, which can cause issues like itchiness or yeast overgrowth." To identify problematic ingredients, owners can conduct a sensitivity test followed by an elimination diet, which removes certain foods one at a time to find the offenders.

Ruth Roberts is an integrative veterinarian and holistic health coach for pets, as well as the creator of The Original CrockPet Diet. Learn more at DrRuthRoberts.com.

SATURDAY, MARCH 1

Dexter Winter Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Huron River Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

Rock, Mineral, Crystal & Fossil Event – Mar 1-2. 11am-6pm, Sat; 12-6pm, Sun. Over 1,000 items, all commercially obtained. Three auctions every hour; both silent and verbal. Separate area has low-priced rocks and fossils that children, or the novice collector, will love. Auction proceeds benefit Scholarship Funds at Schoolcraft College in Livonia. Free admission. VistaTech Center at Schoolcraft College, 18600 Haggerty Rd, Livonia. RoaminRockclub.weebly.com.

SUNDAY, MARCH 9

Spring Forward Holistic Fair – 11am-4pm. Includes: tarot and oracle readings; reiki and energy healing; unique vendors. Free admission. Dragonfly and Birch, 115 E Main St, Manchester. Facebook.com/share/16713kN95Z.

VegMichigan Ann Arbor Lunch Meetup – 1-3pm. A plant-based seasonal menu offering a fusion of international influences. Red Lotus, 529 E Liberty St, 206, Ann Arbor. VegMichigan.org.

Release & Renew: A Sound Bath Experience – 6:30-7:30pm. Join Martina Smith for a rejuvenating and immersive experience of deep breathing, meditation and a relaxing sound massage. $20/Zoom, $30/advance, $40/at the door. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-358-0218. EnlightenedSoulCenter.com.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

Plant A Rain Garden: Keep our Rivers Clean, One Garden at a Time – 6:45-8pm. Susan Bryan will talk about the benefits of rain gardens and how to build and plant one at your own home. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Auditorium, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. AnnArbor.WildOnes.org.

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

Battle of the Bands – 7:30pm. A night of great local music from the incredible student bands of our community. $15. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 15

Chemistry & Flow Monitoring: Washtenaw County Orientation – 9-11:30am. Enjoy being outdoors while measuring the quality of local rivers and creeks. Learn how to collect water samples, measure stream flow, and record water chemistry measurements. No prior experience needed. Huron River Watershed Council, 117 N 1st St, Ste 100, Ann Arbor. 734-769-5123. Register: hrwc.org/volunteer/chemflow.

Dexter Winter Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Huron River Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

2025 Volunteer Training & Season Kick-Off – 10am-12pm. We'll give new volunteers a chance to see how they can join the Legacy family and give our current volunteers an update on what to expect during this year's volunteering season. Legacy Land Conservancy, 6272 Jackson Rd, Ste G, Ann Arbor. LegacyLandConservancy.org.

Boost Your Brain and Improve Your Mental Health – 12pm, Novi; 3:30pm, Dearborn. With Dr. Cory, ND. Do you experience bouts of depression, anxiety or cloudy thinking? Are you or anyone you love worried about cognitive decline or neurodegenerative diseases? If so, this is the class for you. Free. BetterHealthMarket.com.

East Meets West: Harmonizing Organ Energetics – 12pm. With Jeffrey Rogers, Dipl. Ac., L.Ac. Learn about holistic and evidence-based practices, organ functionality, how to incorporate traditional Chinese medicine, organ energetics and personalized treatment plans. Free. Better Health Market, 14105 Hall Rd, Shelby Twp. Space Limited, RSVP: 586-884-6160. BetterHealthMarket.com.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

Mastering Meditation – Sundays, Mar 16-30. 2-4pm. Introductory meditation series offered by the Sri Chinmoy Centre. Topics include: concentration, relaxation and breathing techniques; exploring a meditative lifestyle; self-awareness through meditation. Free. Crazy Wisdom Bookstore and Tea Room, 114 S Main St, Ann Arbor. MeditationAnnArbor.com.

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

Neverending Lamp of Liberation: A Modern Lam Rim – Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm. With Demo Rinpoche. An insightful weekly series exploring the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment (Lam Rim). Open to all, this series serves as a step-by-step guide to Buddhist philosophy and practice, offering practical wisdom for modern life. Jewel Heart, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor 734-994-3387. JewelHeart.org.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

Virtual Cooking Demo with Kisa The Veganizer – 6:30-7:30pm. Kisa will veganize a traditional chicken potpie, she will discuss how to source good options for store-bought vegan food, and she will share what she has in her pantry and then demonstrate how to make a plant-based butter and plant-based cashew milk. Zoom. VegMichigan.org.

National Panel Discussion: The Advocacy Power of Public Native Gardens – 7-8pm. Hosted by Wild Ones Capital Region NY Chapter, Hocking Hills (Seedling) Chapter, San Diego Chapter and Wild Ones National. Webinar will explore how public and demonstration gardens serve as powerful tools for native plant advocacy. AnnArbor.WildOnes.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 22

Mindful Eating – 9:30-11am. Explore a different angle that can help simplify our relationship with food while returning joy and nourishment to the table. By cultivating mindfulness around eating, learn how to tune into your body's natural cues, make more intentional food choices, and find satisfaction in every bite. Free. Dexter District Library, 3255 Alpine St, Dexter. Tinyurl.com/MindfulEating3-22.

Boost Your Brain and Improve Your Mental Health – 12pm, Shelby Twp; 3:30pm Grosse Pointe. With Dr. Cory, ND. Do you experience bouts of depression, anxiety or cloudy thinking? Are you or anyone you love worried about cognitive decline or neurodegenerative diseases? If so, this is the class for you. Free. BetterHealthMarket.com.

Spring Dances of Universal Peace – 7-8:30pm. Part of an international network of dear hearts who like to sing short phrases from word traditions while stepping, turning and holding hands in a circle. Live musicians uplift us. With Certified Leader, Susan Slack. Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, 704 Airport Blvd. Ste 1, Ann Arbor. DancesOfUniversalPeace.org.

SUNDAY, MARCH 23

Reiki Level 1 & 2 Certification Training – 9am-6pm. Reiki Level 1 students are led through a step-by-step discovery of the practice, beginning with the concept that we are all capable of moving towards a

state of balance and wellness. Reiki Level 2 training continues our learning tradition of lecture, discussions, self-treatment and clinical practice with classmates and the community. In-person and zoom. $177/level, $333/both levels. Key Massage & Wellness, 3937 E Willis Rd, Milan. KeyMassageTherapy.org.

Release & Renew: A Sound Bath Experience – 6:30-7:30pm. See Mar 9 listing. Enlightened Soul Center & Shop, 2711 Carpenter Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-358-0218. EnlightenedSoulCenter.com.

TUESDAY, MARCH 25

Best Prep for Pregnancy – Mar 25-29. An online event and expo featuring more than 30 experts and exhibitors. Gain insights into the root causes of female and male infertility, and learn about a whole-health approach to optimal fertility that protects parents and their babies. Sponsored by KnoWEWell and *Natural Awakenings* magazine. For more info or to register: BestPrep4Pregnancy.com.

Michigan Botanical Club – 7-8pm. Reconnecting with and Revitalizing a University-Owned Wetland: Celebrating the First 50 Years, and Planning for the Next 50. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

New Moon Night Hike – 7:30-9pm. Enjoy a night hike under the stars to celebrate the alignment of the moon and the sun. We will do some science experiments out on the trail, learn about night hike etiquette, and visit some nocturnal animals. After the hike, we'll hear stories and poems inspired by the moon and enjoy a campfire. $5/person, free/under age 2. Leslie Science & Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd, Ann Arbor. DiscoverScienceAndNature.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 29

Dexter Winter Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Huron River Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

SUNDAY, MARCH 30

Leaves Under the Lens: Behind the Scenes with a Scientist – 2-4pm. Discover the intersection of science, art, and curiosity with PhD student and artist Rosemary Glos. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

PLAN AHEAD

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9

2025 Summer Community Supported Agriculture – July 9-Sept 24. Offer full and half shares. Complete an online form to receive an agreement and total pricing details. Enrollment is open until shares are filled. Jacob's Fresh Farm, 475 N Fletcher Rd, Dexter. 517-250-1222. JacobsFreshFarm.com.

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DAILY

Ayurveda For Us – Provides online consultations, where clients receive personalized guidance to address chronic health issues and reclaim their vitality. With a focus on diet, herbalism, mental and spiritual healing and lifestyle adjustments, Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to wellness. To schedule a free 30-min discovery call: Calendly.com/d/4dc-gws-6fw/discovery-call. For more info & appt: AyurvedaFor.us.

Herbs for the Southeast Michigan Garden – Learn how to grow and use 20 culinary and medicinal herbs suited for the southeast Michigan garden. Will cover preservation techniques, basic medicine making and crafting herbal oils, poultices, infused honeys and vinegars plus more. Free. More info & register: Castle Remedies.podia.com.

Introduction to Homeopathy Class – Learn how to choose remedies and how to use them. Class contains nearly 4 hrs of pre-recorded videos. Downloadable resources. $75. More info & register: Castle Remedies.podia.com.

Oracle Readings – With Dominique Lavoisier, owner of Mediumship with Angels LLC. Incorporates higher-dimensional energies to offer additional insights and support. Florida-based; all readings done remotely. For appt or more info: MediumshipWithAngels.com.

Holistic Health Consultation – 9am-7pm. Online or phone consultation consultations take about 1 hr and are provided by Certified Xolar Vibronics Holistic Educator and Life Coach Ikaro Phoenix. Be introduced to various techniques, elements or holistic ways of viewing the situation which help the soul to be reeducated and empowered to deal with problems and eliminate them from their root. $150. For appt: LivingWisdomCoaching.earth.

Pets & Parents Reiki Session – 9am-9pm. Sessions for wellness, critical care and end-of-life transition. Actively experience the use of reiki touch with your pet. Learn additional tips for helping your pet. Virtual 40-min appt. $20. 231-590-0001. TCDesoto@gmail.com.

The Best Affirmation for You – 10am. Learn about the power of affirmations and how they can bring about positive events and circumstances. Call for a 10-15-min consultation with a licensed professional counselor to pick the best affirmation for you. Purchase an affirmation stone to enhance what you are affirming in your life by having a visible reminder. Free. 734-644-6943. Harmony2c.com/affirmation-stones.

Tiny Lions Lounge & Adoption Center (TLC) – 12-7pm, Wed-Sun. Offers feline-friendly activities with kittens and cats available to take home. 5245 Jackson Rd, Ste A1, 734-661-3575. Tiny Lions.org.

Naturally Purifying and Supercharging Your Body Podcast – 7-7:45pm. Matthew Hazen is the owner of Human Consciousness Support, a company that produces a unique nutraceutical product called MasterPeace. Free. BuzzSprout.com/1206776/14236700.

WEEKLY

Yoga with Crysterra Wellness – Variety of classes Tues-Thurs. Cost varies. For schedule & details: CrysterraWellness.com.

Stop Sabotaging Your Self-Care – Christy DeBurton will guide you on a journey of self-discovery to examine the obstacles that stand in the way of you taking better care of yourself. 4-wk self-paced online course. $79 (regular $149). Yoga Room, 889 Honey Creek Dr, Ann Arbor. Info@ChristyDebBurton.com. YogaRoomAnnArbor.com/online-courses-self-care.

SUNDAYS

Bach Flower Remedies Level 1 Live Web – 3rd Sun. Learn how to use the 38 Bach flower remedies to help yourself and others conquer fear, worry, overwhelm, low self-esteem, lack of focus, poor concentration, trouble sleeping and more. With Nancy Buono, BFCP, Director of Bach Flower Education. BachFlowerSchool.com.

Hudson Valley Humane Society Rescue Reading – 10am-12pm. Includes humane education lessons, group read-aloud and dog meet-and-greet. Drop-off event. $10; space limited. HSHV.org/RescueReading.

Online Meditation from Anywhere – 11am-12pm. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

Sunday Talk with Demo Rinpoche – 11am-12pm. Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-994-3387. JewelHeart.org.

Common Cycle Bike Repair Sessions – 11am-3pm. Learn about bike repair, share tools and build a sense of community. Volunteers ready to assist with maintenance issues or personal projects. 416 W Huron St, Ste 11, Ann Arbor. 734-619-0907. CommonCycle.org.

Critter House Open Hours – 12-3pm. A great way to get up close and personal with some fascinating animals, all while developing an appreciation for the incredible diversity of the natural world. Suggested donation: $5/person, $20/family. Leslie Science & Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd, Ann Arbor. DiscoverScienceAndNature.org.

Wonder Walks – Thru Mar. 1pm. Also Wed, 5:30pm. Designed for all ages to inspire curiosity and learning from each other through activities that model curiosity and honor nature. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

Inspiring Talk by Mata Yogananda – 7pm. Spiritual talk, pure meditation and silent prayer, with Winged Prayer for all in need at 9pm. Free. Self-Realization Meditation Healing Centre, 7187 Drumheller, Bath. 517-641-6201. SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

MONDAYS

Weekday Morning Online Meditation – Mon-Fri. 7:30-8am. Insight Meditation Ann Arbor offers a 30-min online group sitting via Zoom. Free; donations gratefully accepted. InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org.

Beginner Tai Chi – 10-11:15am. A series of postures linked together in a fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). $195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Mindful Dexter – 12-12:30pm. Last Mon. A short 30-min guided meditation that is a simple and practical mindfulness tune-up that you can access from wherever you are. Zoom. Tinyurl.com/mindfuldexter.

Soul Power Mystic Arts – 5pm. 2nd Mon & Wed. Re-claim the real you, hear your evolutionary calling and cultivate the nature mystic within through 4 retreats, individual training, self-acceptance process, nature qigong, plant ally ceremonies and body-ecology psychology. Sliding scale. Mother Bear Sanctuary, 20470 Barton, Pinckney. 734-796-6690. MotherBearSanctuary.com.

Meaningful Mondays – 8pm. SevaLight Retreat Centre warmly welcomes everyone, of all faiths, meditation practices and traditions, to join us virtually. Will gather on video conference sharing in song/chants and inspiring readings from Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharmaji's writings, followed by Pure Meditation and silent prayer. Free. Email by 10am any Mon to receive the info about how to join by video: Info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

TUESDAYS

Senior Discount Tuesdays: Castle Remedies – Customers over the age of 65 can receive a 10% discount on their in-store purchases. In the Parkway Center, 2345 S Huron Pkwy, Ann Arbor. 734-973-8990. CastleRemedies.com.

Online Meditation from Anywhere – 9-9:30am. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

WEDNESDAYS

Wonder Walks – Thru Mar. 5:30pm. See Sun listing. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

Get the Most from Your DNA Test – 6-8pm. Learn what you can do with your results and what additional opportunities are available for discovering your genetic genealogy. Understand the science, how to find information and how to share that information. Course 39651. $59. Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E Huron River Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-677-5060. wccnet.edu/noncredit.

THURSDAYS

Move With Us: Trager Mentastics – Thru May 1. 10-10:45am. 1st Thurs. This is a gentle form of movement that is low key, focused on the nervous system releasing restrictive patterns. $12 cash. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Class Observation – 11-11:30am. Also Fri. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Qigong: Basics – 11:15am-12:15pm. Class introduces participants to basic self-care stretches, breathing, meditations and self-acupressure for reducing muscle tension, increasing mindfulness, and revitalization. $180. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Beginner Tai Chi – 6-7:15pm. A series of postures linked together in fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). $195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Thursday Hills of Ann Arbor – 6:30pm. We ride some of the best hills A2 has to offer. A/B/C: 10-40 miles. Start at Wheels in Motion, 3402 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor. WheelsInMotion.us.

Thursday Evening Silent Meditation – 6:30-8:15pm. With Insight Meditation Ann Arbor. Free; donations gratefully accepted. Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W Liberty St, Ann Arbor. 734-994-4455. InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org.

Mindful Dexter – 7:30-8pm. 3rd Thurs. A short 30-min guided meditation that is a simple and practical mid-month mindfulness tune-up that you can access from wherever you are. Zoom. Tinyurl.com/mindfuldexter.

FRIDAYS

Natural Turmeric Indian Wedding Facial for All – 9am-6pm. Design combines traditional ingredients like turmeric, used in Indian weddings for skin beautification, with modern machines that enhance the overall experience. Mahabir Wellness, 1640 Haslett Rd, Ste 100, Haslett. 517-325-9954. MahabirWellness.com.

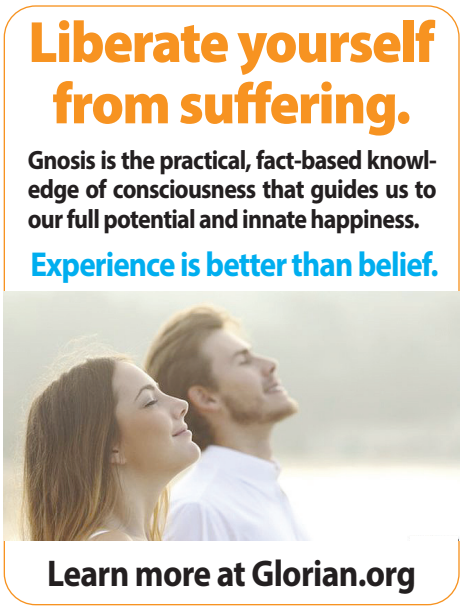
TMJ Massage Demo on Jaw – 10-10:30am. 1st Fri. Patti Stephen, LMT and long-term dental professional, will offer 2 demos for guests and students to observe on resolving and approaching TMJ tension. Free. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal & Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Online: Prayer Power Hour – 12-12:30pm. Prayer changes things. Our goal is simple: to love you, pray for you and introduce you to our loving Creator, the Great Healer. Free. Tinyurl.com/PrayerPowerHour.

SATURDAYS

Mindful Dexter – 9:30-10:30am. 2nd Sat. Includes a 25-30-min guided meditation, a few minutes of silent meditation, followed by time for comments/questions and a discussion on a mindfulness topic. Dexter Library, 3255 Alpine St, Dexter. 734-476-8474. Tinyurl.com/mindfuldexter.

Pregnancy, Childbirth, Postpartum and Baby Classes – 6-7pm. Classes are held virtually online led by our top AID instructors utilizing state of the art visual aids and activities to keep it fun and engaging while presenting the latest evidenced based material on each topic. $35/class. Childbirth-Classes.com.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DrDobracki@AnnArborsDentist.com
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Education

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School of Pharmacy
CUW.edu/NPS

Take the next step toward a career that makes a difference! Discover Your Future in Natural Product Sciences with our flexible graduate programs. Choose from a 30-credit online Master's degree or a 12-credit graduate certificate, both designed to fit your life and goals. Specialize in medical cannabis or nutraceuticals, and prepare for exciting roles in healthcare, pharmacy, research and development, manufacturing, business and beyond. *See ad page 29.*

Energy Enhancement & Wellness

MIRACULOUS ENERGIES
(A Private Membership Association)
MiraculousEnergiesAssociation@gmail.com
517-599-4949
MiraculousEnergies.com

The EESystem combines Body, Mind, Spirit and Science. This system generates multiple bio-active life-enhancing energy fields, including scalar waves and a morphogenic energy field, also known as scalar vortex. When combined with light as biophotons, it can interface with the body's DNA matrix and promote wellness. *See ad on inside front cover..*

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DR. MALCOLM SICKELS, M.D.
210 Little Lake Dr, Ste 10, Ann Arbor
734-332-9936
DrSickels.com

Malcolm Sickels earned his M.D. from the University of Michigan, where he taught fellow medical students about different approaches to health. Board certified in Family Medicine and Holistic Medicine, he is in solo practice on the west side of Ann Arbor. Learn more at Dr. Sickels.com. *See ads, pages 10 and 13.*

Holistic Mental Wellness

CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE COUNSELING
Karen Kerr, LMSW
2010 Hogback Road, Ste. 6E, Ann Arbor
734-660-5610
Karen8Kerr@gmail.com
KarenPKerr.com

In offering a caring, collaborative and supportive experience, I draw upon a holistic approach with a rich variety of practices designed to deepen awareness, uplift mood, manage stress and develop a stronger sense of self-worth, purpose, connection and joy in life.

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Serving Michigan for nearly 40 years. Castle Remedies offers over 1,000 homeopathic remedies as well as herbs, essential oils, flower essences, books, unique gifts and jewelry. We carry top-tier nuitional supplement brands such as Metagenics, Ortho Molecular, Xymogen, Integrative Therapeutics, Karuna, NOW, and more. Classes available online. *See ad page 23.*

Lymphatic Bodywork/ Reiki

ELEVATE MIND & BODYWORK
Sarah Girard BS, LMT
1140 N. Wagner Rd., Ann Arbor
SarahGirard.lmt@gmail.com
Elevate.MassageTherapy.com

Take your wellness & spiritual journey to the next level. Sarah combines traditional "medical" Manual Lymphatic Drainage techniques with Reiki healing, breathing guidance, visualization & intuitive listening. All sessions are heart-centered, gentle, and geared towards radical self-love. Request an appointment today.

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WHOLE LIFE VETERINARY SERVICES
WholeLifeVet@gmail.com
517-474-4050
WholeLifeVeterinary.com

Give your horse or pet the benefit of both worlds with a combination of Western medical knowledge and Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine and acupuncture in the comfort of your own home or barn. We are committed to providing you with the best holistic pet health. We provide holistic care, in-home euthanasia, and equine lameness care. *See ad page 25.*

Mold Testing & Remediation

MOLDPRO
John Du Bois, CMI, CMR, CCMI
247 W. Main Street, Milan
734-439-8800 · MoldProllc.com

MoldPro offers chemical-free mold remediation, independent certified mold testing, inspection and consultation services all over SE Michigan specializing in mold biotoxin illness clients.

Nature-Oriented Meeting Space

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7748 Clark Lake Road, Chelsea
734-475-1892
MFCenter.org/rent

We offer the holistic community a nature-oriented meeting space for workshops, meetings, counseling, yoga, youth groups and family gatherings. Main room accommodates 100, with two smaller classrooms and kitchen facilities. Hiking trails. Weekend rates range from $200-$400, additional for extensive grounds use, camping. *See ad page 13.*

Neurofeedback

NEW MOON NEURO
105 E. Middle Street, Chelsea
734-210-1922
NewMoonNeuro.com

Located within ALCHEMY Holistic Collective, New Moon Neuro is the area's only IASIS Micro Current Neurofeedback Provider. Find lasting support for anxiety, depression, ADHD, insomnia, OCD, addiction, TBI, migraines, pain issues and more - for the entire family. *See ad page 27.*

School/Education

ANN ARBOR SCHOOL OF MASSAGE, HERBAL & NATURAL MEDICINE
734-769-7794
NSHAAssociates@gmail.com
NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net

Massage therapy training is a one-year program that fulfills the 717-hour, state-licensed professional training with the required 80 hours of clinical internship. The rate for scheduled, Tuesday through Friday appointments at our student massage clinic is $50/hr.

Smoking Cessation

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Center - A Joyful Journey
734-883-8775

Stop smoking in one visit. Afraid it's going to be too painful or too difficult? Our unique specialized and proven system makes it easy. Become a happy and permanent non-smoker today. *See ad page 21.*

Tai Chi & Qigong

PEACEFUL DRAGON SCHOOL
1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor
734-741-0695
PeacefulDragonSchool.com

Tai chi promotes relaxation, is a meditation in motion and is known for increasing balance. Qigong means energy. This class includes Wild Goose Form, stretching, meditation and self-acupressure.

Weight Loss

FREE AT LAST! HYPNOSIS CENTER - A JOYFUL JOURNEY
734-883-8775

Lose weight now with hypnosis. Achieve permanent positive life and habit changes through our safe, rapid and effective system. Tap the potential of your mind to create the health and vitality you've always wanted. *See ad page 21.*

Wellness Centers

CRYSTERRA WELLNESS
3173 Baker Rd, Dexter
734-649-1849
CrysterraWellness.com

Ancient inspirations for modern well-being. Supporting you and your wellness journey every step of the way with reflexology, reiki, lithography and yoga.

THRIVE! WELLNESS CENTER
148 S. Industrial Dr. Saline
734-470-6766
Thrive-Wellness-Center.com

Shannon Roznay, DC, specializes in Nutrition Response Testing and Activator Chiropractic. Thrive! also carries natural foods, skin and home products. *See ad page 17.*

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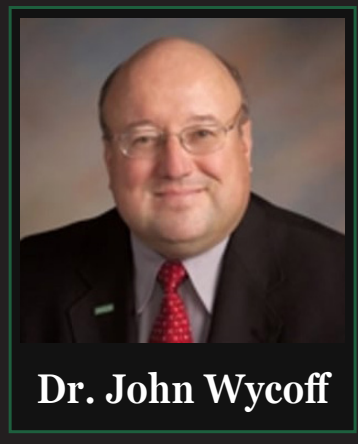
Decreased appetite • Improved Energy • Lower Blood Sugar and Blood Pressure
Reduce Risk of Heart Disease and Stroke • Long Term Success



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